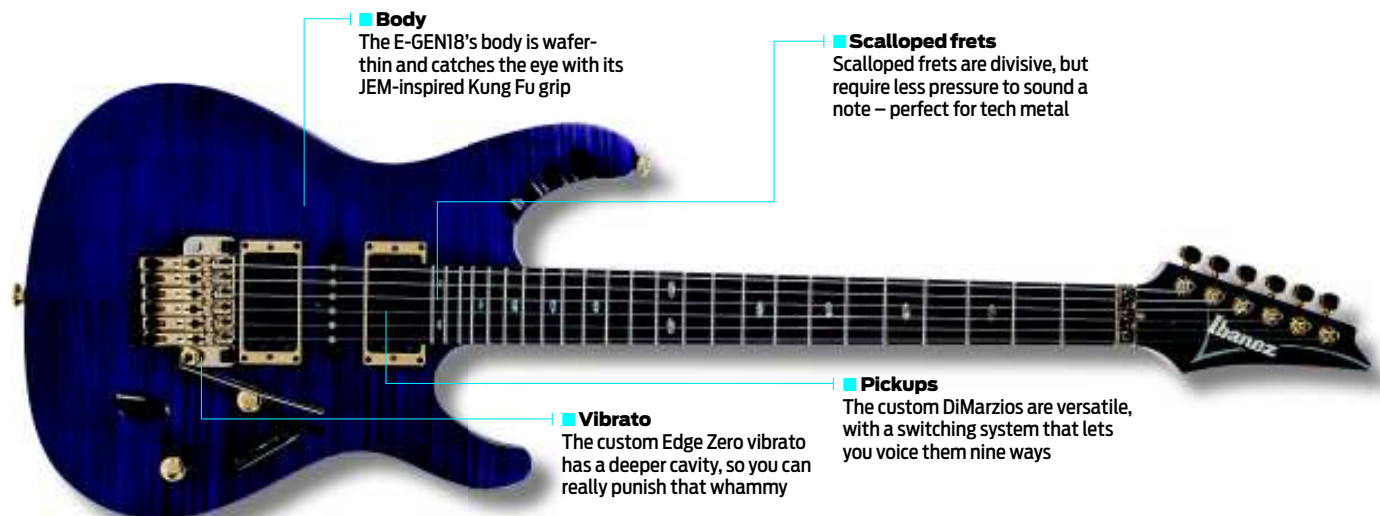


Rocked & Rated



"SONICALLY, THERE'S NO LIMIT. THIS AXE MANAGES TO SWING BETWEEN FAT 'N' FUNKY NECK TONES, STRAT QUACKS AND BUZZSAW BRIDGE BITE"

Purple Reign:
Herman Li's Ibanez
E-GEN18 model



Body
The E-GEN18's body is wafer-thin and catches the eye with its JEM-inspired Kung Fu grip

Scalloped frets
Scalloped frets are divisive, but require less pressure to sound a note – perfect for tech metal

Vibrato
The custom Edge Zero vibrato has a deeper cavity, so you can really punish that whammy

Pickups
The custom DiMarzios are versatile, with a switching system that lets you voice them nine ways

Ibanez E-GEN18 £1,799 Herman Li

TG feels the 'Force of the shredman's unique signature model...

Herman Li is a total pain in the arse. Not our words, but those of the DragonForce man himself (and possibly the Ibanez design team charged with creating his new E-GEN18). "It took a long time, because I'm really annoying," Li admitted, "but every single detail is there for a reason. I didn't want to release a signature that's the same as what's already out there, just with a different colour."

The sizzle: Li's insistence that "the one that people get in the shops is the same model I play" means the E-GEN18 is spec'd up to the nuts and correspondingly expensive. "It has its own unique pickups," he points out (that's the trio of custom DiMarzio HLMs), "a unique switching system and unique bridge." TG also notes such 'ooh-look-at-that' features as the 'Kung Fu' grip, a lower horn whose cutaway is modelled

on Li's hand, and a board with scalloped top frets that "make it easier to bend high notes, especially at the speed we play".

We say: Ibanez has misjudged the wealth of DragonForce fans, but there's no question that quality drips from the E-GEN18. The body is among the slimmest we've played, while the five-piece Wizard neck and board beg you to lay technique on them. You wouldn't carry something this costly by the Kung Fu grip, and the 'low-profile' middle pickup doesn't totally duck the pick, but Li's slave-driving has paid off, with the trem's deep cavity letting you monster the bar, the cutaway allowing you to get stuck in, and the scallops taking only a feather-light touch. It won't *make* you play like Li, but it won't *stop* you either.

The old criticism that DragonForce songs all sound the same can't be applied to the

E-GEN18, with the combination of a five-position selector and a push-pull volume control giving you a total of nine different voicings. Sonically, there's no limit, with this axe managing to swing between fat 'n' funky neck tones, Strat quacks and buzzsaw bridge bite. It's always underpinned by the warmth of the mahogany (even if sustain is inevitably lacking) and it might surprise you with its classic roar.

Sadly, the price tag will make all this a moot point for many DragonForce fans. But we'd still urge you to crawl through the fire and flames (with your flies undone) to bag this stunning axe.
Henry Yates

At a glance

Ibanez E-GEN18 Herman Li

BODY: Solid mahogany with flamed maple top
NECK: Maple/walnut, 5-piece, bolt-on
FINGERBOARD: Rosewood (scalloped frets 20 to 24)
SCALE: 25.5"
PICKUPS: 3x DiMarzio HLM custom pickups
CONTROLS: Volume (push-pull), tone, five-way pickup selector
HARDWARE: Gold
FINISH: Transparent Violet Flat [pictured]
CONTACT: Headstock Distribution Ltd 01215 086666
WEB: www.ibanez.com

SUMMARY

For: Quality and imagination across the board

Against: You pay for what you get

★★★★☆

TG says... Enter the Dragon



The E-GEN18 lets you grab the dragon by the horns

